

Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission

Meeting Notes (Draft)

Whiteman Air Force Base

Building 3076 (Off Base at Golf Course)

101 Spirit Blvd.

Whiteman AFB, MO 65305

October 29, 2009

Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission Members Present:
Robert Welling and Mr. Jeff Bloemker.

Guests: Ms. Daina Dawkins, Whiteman AFB; Ms. Harriet Wolfe, Superintendent of Sedalia Schools; Ms. Maggie Anderson, Superintendent, Knob Noster Schools; Jamie Burkhart, M.S. Principal, Knob Noster; Gordon Hayes, Superintendent, Henry Co. R-I (Winston); Andy Kohl, Assistant Superintendent, Warrensburg; Scott Patrick, Assistant Superintendent, Warrensburg; Shane Delugh, Principal WHS-WSBG RVI.

Department of Economic Development Staff Present: Trent Griffith, Boards and Commissions Coordinator; Marcy Mealy, DED.

Mr. Robert Welling called the meeting of the Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission Education Sub-Committee to order at 10:30 a.m. The meeting took place at the Whiteman Air Force Base Building 3076 (Off Base at Golf Course) 101 Spirit Blvd.

Mr. Welling said that the intention of the meeting was to share determinations that the MMPEC intends to promote. The Commission is seeking relief in what has become a problem. Whiteman Air Force Base is critical to national defense, as a result there are required personnel policies that touch school aged children of military personnel deemed "mission essential." In most circumstances, military families can choose their residence and school district. However in the case of "mission essential" personnel, they are required to reside on base. Commanding Officers past and present have been vocal concerning these issues. Finally, a test case was brought to the attention of the MMPEC. Jimmy Dawkins is the son of an Operations Officer; on a previous assignment at Whiteman the family lived in Warrensburg and Jimmy attended school in Warrensburg. When the family came back to Whiteman this year, his father was deemed "mission essential" requiring the family to live on base in the Knob Noster school district. The family requested a waiver from Warrensburg for Jimmy to attend the school as a junior-in-high-school. The school district allowed the request however he was still not eligible to play varsity sports; this matter was later resolved when a waiver was granted by MSHSAA. MSHSAA granted the waiver because of the "mission essential" piece in the matter.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Educations has ruled that the parent being "mission essential" personnel is not a sufficient reason to allow state aid to follow the student to Warrensburg. There is no federal impact aid since the federal impact aid is tied to the state funding. Mr. Welling told of a conversation between him and Dr. John Forkenbrock of the

National Association of Federally Impacted Schools. Dr. Forkenbrock confirmed the rule for impact eligibility, 400 military students in the District or 3% of the total enrollment.

Warrensburg does not qualify because it only has about 218 military students. Dr. Forkenbrock knew of no exception or rule refinement that might allow Federal Impact Aid to follow a child like Jimmy Dawkins to Warrensburg. He said it's law that the Impact Aid goes to the school district where the military installation is located, Knob Noster is this case if it applies for impact aid for Jimmy. Applications are always one year behind and that means that the next application for this school year Impact Aid must be filed by January 31, 2010. Mr. Forkenbrock thought it might be possible for Knob Noster to apply for the Impact Aid and then tuition Jimmy out to Warrensburg by an agreement whereby Knob Noster would receive the aid and keep a small portion for administrative expense and send the larger part to Warrensburg. Mr. Welling also spoke through a telephone conversation with Ms. Kristen Wallis-Rivas, Impact Aid office, Department of Education. She said that if the state funding is fixed then the federal impact aid will follow. Section 167.020 RSMo. would need to show that good cause shall include "mission essential."

Recommendations for Legislative Action to be included in the 2009 MMPEC Annual Report:

- 1.) Enact legislation which provides that when a residence waiver under Section 167.020 RSMo. has been granted for a child or children of a military parent required to live on a military installation because deemed "military essential", the State of Missouri Aid funding allocable for such child or children shall be paid to the school district where that child or those children are in actual attendance even though their physical residence is in another school district.
- 2.) Amend Section 167.020 RSMo. to provide that "good cause" for a residence waiver shall include a circumstance where a military parent is deemed "military essential" and required to live on a military installation.

These recommendations take no discretion away from the school board but if a decision has to be made that it allows good cause to include "mission essential."

Mr. Welling said that Penny Rucker, Council for School Administrators had contacted MMPEC with concerns that the Commission was promoting open enrollment. Mr. Welling said that there is no intent to pursue open enrollment and the MMPEC was trying to satisfy a military security need. It is a rare exemption but MMPEC recognizes that school district suffers if state aid and federal impact aid do not follow the student. MMPEC wants to see statutory revisions so that this is not the case. MMPEC simply wants Missouri to be seen as military-friendly.

Dr. Anderson, Superintendent, Knob Noster, said that when she was approached by the Wheeler's she completely understood the Dawkins' issue. She was surprised that the federal impact aid did not follow the student. She said she did have concerns that all 19 "mission essential" families would want to leave the district. Ms. Wheeler explained that it takes special circumstances for families to choose a school out-of-district but she does want them to have the choice. She explained that in the past, families have taken out loans to finance tuition for

their child. Dr. Anderson said that certainly what we do today is going to affect the future. Mr. Kohl, Assistant Superintendent, Warrensburg Public School District, said that someone deserves the money and the state is getting out of funding for that student.

Mr. Welling explained to the guests that MMPEC had been informed on the Missouri State High School Activities Association by Dr. Kerwin Urhahn at the MMPEC meeting at Whiteman Air Force Base on October 1, 2009. The Commission received a fresh understanding of the rules and the presentation dispelled misconception that military transfers were ineligible for activities for 365 days. Dr. Urhahn said upon receiving a written request from MMPEC regarding an exemption for high school age children of "mission essential" military personnel, he would present the request to the members of MSHSAA in January. Dr. Anderson asked if this would lead to "mission essential" kids being recruited. Mr. Welling stated that this would be investigated by MSHSAA. Ms. Wheeler said she hoped the focus would stay on the family trying to stay together and not have to separate because of specific educational needs or the "resume building" path that the family has chosen for the child whether or not it involves athletics.

Mr. Bloemker said that the Commission has discussed and understands some of these same concerns. There may be a limited radius involved to deter the consideration of recruiting. He stated that there would be no automatic pass but appreciated the concern. MSHSAA does investigate each request.